



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

2. — *Memorials of Mrs. Hemans; with Illustrations of her Literary Character from her private Correspondence.*
By HENRY F. CHORLEY. 8vo.

THIS volume is an extension of a series of papers, printed not long since, in "The Athenæum." They were read at the time with a deep interest, heightened by the recent death of the lamented poetess, in whose memory they were composed. The time probably has not yet come, when a complete life of Mrs. Hemans can, with propriety, be written. The circles in which she moved are yet too unbroken; the persons with whom she was connected are still on the stage; too many chords of feeling would vibrate to the touch of the biographer's hand.

Mr. Chorley has given as minute a sketch of Mrs. Hemans's life, as he could do, with a proper regard to the feelings of her survivors. He has confined himself mostly to such details as have a bearing on her literary career exclusively, leaving the delicate circumstances of her domestic life hardly touched upon. He gives some interesting notices of her childhood and youth, and some valuable details of her family. But we cannot, on the whole, applaud the editor's part in this volume. His narrative is far enough from being either perspicuous or graceful. He feels bound to moralize and philosophize, at every breathing place; and his speculations and sentiment are not sufficiently ingenious or affecting, to pay for the trouble of reading them. A man or woman either, who sets a just value upon time, and thinks it proper for a book to have either freshness of style, or vigor of sentiment, or clearness of ideas, will assuredly skip over every one of Mr. Chorley's dissertations, and read nothing else than the mere facts and Mrs. Hemans's letters. It is a great pity that so much ink, paper, space, and time should be taken up with unmeaning words. It would be a good thing for some publisher to print "Chorley's Memorials," with the omission of every thing belonging to Chorley.

The letters will be read with interest, by all who take an interest in Mrs. Hemans. They are written with entire simplicity, and without the slightest thought of publication. The propriety of giving such letters to the public, at least so soon after the author's death, may well be questioned. But setting that consideration aside, the greater part of the letters will give a very agreeable impression of Mrs. Hemans's private character, and to most people, quite a new view of her intellectual qualities. The sad and solemn strain of her poetry had not prepared us for the ease, vivacity, and wit, with which they abound. They are written in

a gay, off-hand style, full of lively sallies and ludicrous images, and show any thing but a turn for sentimental melancholy. The familiar tone, and rapid manner with which they were thrown off, forbid our making them a measure of her intellectual ability; and yet we find in them occasionally a beautiful piece of criticism, or a profound reflection, that would appear well in an elaborate essay. The most agreeable letters of the whole collection are those in which she describes her visits to the Lake, and to Walter Scott. We doubt whether the character of Wordsworth and Scott have ever been more truly represented; the one, an amiable egotist, absorbed in his poetical reveries, or reading aloud his own works, or talking about Rydal and Grassmere, with which he has identified his poetical existence; and the other, never alluding to himself but once, and that in joke.

We have been rather unpleasantly affected with one or two things in these letters. Mrs. Hemans indulged herself, it seems, in ridiculing her visitors and correspondents; visitors who were drawn to her by reverence and love; and correspondents whose intense admiration of her works could only vent itself in grateful and sometimes extravagant epistles. There is no doubt that many of these people were troublesome enough, and their calls an importunate draft upon her time; there is no doubt that many of the letters she received were ridiculous and tasteless outpourings of boyish or girlish admiration. But a little reflection would have taught Mrs. Hemans that the love and veneration which a great poetess inspires, even in awkward and clownish spirits, is no fit subject for ridicule, and her good feelings should have repressed the lively sally, even in confidential intercourse with her friends. *Friends will sometimes print.* There are many passages in the letters that must cut deep somewhere; there are many sarcastic descriptions, that must be excessively mortifying to somebody. We fancy that her American admirers come in for a full share of ridicule, and we think it quite likely they had a full share in that "Albumean persecution," which she so humorously describes. Some of her American friends are men whose character and fame are the world's property; and of them she never speaks but with high and becoming respect. But such is not the case with far the greater part. This topic ought to be distinctly considered, because we Americans often make great mistakes that expose us to the derision of distinguished foreigners. Many enthusiastic spirits among us fancy that the great English authors, whose works they admire, are beings set apart and sanctified from vulgar life, and that the incense wafted across the Atlantic will be a grateful tribute to them in their Olympian abodes. They accordingly sit down to

their desks, and fill out sheet after sheet of foolscap with high-flown panegyric, send it off, and get thoroughly laughed at for their pains. Such people,—they are generally inexperienced young gentlemen and sentimental young ladies,—make the universal Yankee nation appear in the eyes of Christendom to be a mighty generation of greenhorns. A little more self-respect, and a little less desire “to be kicked by the duke,” would save our countrymen from many a mortifying comment.

Mr. Chorley has done wrong in publishing such things as we have spoken of. It was imprudent, and in bad taste, to write them; but it is a treachery to the confidence of friendship to print them. Public opinion ought to frown the practice down, and set the seal of reprobation upon it; or all people who think they are distinguished or are going to be, must cease writing confidential letters. And then how dull and tiresome will everybody's correspondence become! How soon will the lively interchange of thought per mail die out; and what an alarming falling-off will take place in the revenues of the Post-office! The Cadmean invention will cease to supply the place of personal intercourse, and Mr. Kendall's occupation will be gone.

3. — *The American Almanac and Repository of Useful Knowledge, for the Year 1837.* Boston; published by Charles Bowen. 12mo. pp. 324.

WE rise from the examination of some of the most distinguished almanacs of France, England, and Germany, with the conviction that our “American Almanac” stands unsurpassed by any of this most valuable class of periodical publications. Its astronomical calculations, executed by a well-known enthusiast in the vigils of the astronomer, and in the tedious tasks of numerical calculation, are adapted by their generality and minuteness to the wants of the nicest observer, in every part of the United States, and place this department of the work far above that of all but the professedly astronomical almanac. In its meteorological and other miscellaneous information, it is admirably suited to the wants of the country; but, in the extent, the variety, and the correctness of its statistical information, it is without a rival. The statistical department in the other almanacs, consists of little more than a court calendar and annual register, with some general account of the population, &c. of different countries, repeated year after year, with only such changes as are absolutely required. In the American Almanac, on the